New Poems
by Stephen Phillips

NEW POEMS

WITHDRAWN

By the Same Author

POEMS: with which is incorporated "Christ in Hades"

PAOLO AND FRANCESCA: A Tragedy in four acts

HEROD: A Tragedy in three acts

MARPESSA: Illustrated by Philip Connard

NEW POEMS

BY

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

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9044

ENDYMION

ENDYMION, glistering from the morning stream,
In beautiful cold youth with virgin eyes,
Sprang naked up the Latmian steep, and stood
In the red sunrise shaking from his hair
The river-drops, and laughed, he knew not why.
Hardly might one believe that he was born
Out of a mortal woman and with pain;
But that his mother, like some pleasant tree,
Whose husband is the kind-embracing sun,
Had yielded him at leisure to the ground.
He breathed and suffered not; and all his youth

Was filled with quiet singing, secret glee;
His dewy thoughts yet trembled on the leaves.
And if he wept, he wept but in his dreams;
For sadness, that all day on us attends,
Was his delicious toy in midnight hour;
Dimly he sorrowed under many stars;
And, rousing, he would wonder at those drops
Upon his cheek. And if he loved at all,
'T was in some dream, where all we trust is true,
Moonlight unfading musical with waves.
Now as he stood, and in the sunrise dripped,
The dedicated Dawn with downcast look
Was gently led by the enraptured Sun
Up to the high noon-ritual, till at length
She opened at the ocean her grave eyes.
Then, as she slowly flushed, Endymion

Released his flocks upon the slope: and so
Even from the blue unto the golden hour,
Without a thought, under the open sky,
Without emotion to and fro he moved,
Sweet-blooded, and with perfect sleep inspired.
But when the orb was dropping in the cold,
And faintness came upon the fields, and birds
Ceased in the thickets one by one, he penned
His sheep secure; until the summer Moon
On the horizon burned a forest green,
Lighting, as in a temple, fiery aisles,
And one tremendous nave with banners hung;
Ushering mystery upon the air.
Now was She swimming full in the dark vault,
The darker for her beauty, when she seemed
To pause; there was no breathing in the heaven.

Lo! like a lily vast the luminous Bloom
Unfolded slow upon the noon of night:
A moment, like a rain-drop at its edge,
Selene, brightly faltering, earthward slid;
And all the argent Flower had closed again.
Endymion heard his name amid the stars
Breathed; and again "Endymion!" he heard
Cried out in passion between earth and heaven;
Then "O Endymion!" stole into his ear:
He feels Selene naked in his arms.
"O human face so far beneath my pain,"
She murmured; "suffer me to touch thy lips;
For though I rule the night, yet still am I
A woman: without love I cannot live.
Alone, alone for ever, Endymion!
Unwedded, barren, and yet brilliant young.
Cold is my life; but thou art warm and glad.

Chill are my veins; but I can feel thy blood
Run from thy rich heart to thy finger-ends.
Kiss me but once, that I may feel thy joy
Spring through my veins and tingle in my soul."
She kissed him: and Endymion trembling said,
"O mystic Brilliance, why hast thou disturbed
My simple youth that was so pleased to breathe?
Till now I was content 'twixt grass and cloud;
To be alive I deemed a lavish gift,
And ripen slowly under falling beams.
To me it was enough to hear the shower,
And the low laughter blown from the bright sea.
To me till now it hath sufficed to watch

The summer quivering over holy bloom,
Or August apple wooed by orchard grass,
Or stripped December waving mournfully
Her bared arms to the cloud. This was the world
To me; but now what melancholy sweet
Steals over me, what magical distress,
Distant delicious trouble and new pain!
Ah! Ah! what hast thou done? for I begin
To grieve for ancient wars, and at the thought
Of women that have died long, long ago,
For sea-tossed heroes labouring toward the West.
Ah! Ah! what hast thou done? for I am thrilled
With perils in the enchanted dawn of Time,
And I begin to sorrow for strange things

And to be sad with men long-dead; O now
I suffer with old legends, and I pine
At long sea-glances for a single sail.
Yet have I deeper pleasure than ever yet:
What now I feel, I would not now forgo;
This folding closer, and this drawing up
To the still Soul which hath imagined us.
Listen! the sea is on the verge of speech,
The breeze hath something private for me:
    Night
Would lead me, like a creature dumb, with
    signs.
And though I grieve with all, with all I live:
I am a sitter by the cottage-fire;
By perfect-sleeping children; by the bed
Of the cold maid who slumbers in her bloom;
Of lovers clasped together after years,

Long years: I pace the deck superb of ships,
I charge amid the hurtle of faces grim,
I sing at eve to aged silent men.
O I must vent this woe, this ecstasy,
Or I shall die of joy and pity: now
Sweet words are fluttering at my mouth, and sounds
Which it were death to leave upon the tongue!
I must make music of my brother's pain.
Give me thy lips anew, transcendent Grief!"
Then spoke Selene, brightening as she spoke:
"Love, though my lips inflicted on thee pain,
It was a glorious pain: thou hadst a sight
Into the deep Bosom that sighed the stars.
Thou wast permitted for strange things to grieve
And to be sad with men long-dead: yet know

The boundless bliss of that world-sympathy,
When tenderness has found its lovely word,
And all the pity into music passed.
Now can we never part, Endymion;
Too deeply have we mingled. Wilt thou
come,
And drift upon this bosom through the deep?
Say, wilt thou lead a life which, though less
bright,
Is beautiful to those of noon aweary,
The rarer day of spirits exquisite?
Is it so little ocean to allure,
Or rise in silence on the battle-field;
To soothe the spires and steeples of the world,
Or the blue-darting pyramids; to clothe
In lovely raiment even the starkest crag;
Make the Sahara like a lily bloom,

A huge and delicate flower; to reconcile
The coldest hills; to fill the gaps of stone,
To gloze with glory intervals of Time;
To breathe into the bones of cities dead
An argent soul, reweave the passionate halls
Where waves the grass, and prostrate empires old
Raise into trembling immortality?
Is it so little to rebuild a world
Where all seems possible at last, where Death
Is not, nor parting, nor the dreaded chill,
Nor coldest age, nor injury, and where
Slowly the dreaming earth begins to trust;
To feel those fragile souls that dread the sun
Sweetly unfold themselves; or to restore
To toilers grown so diffident with dust
The spacious revelation of the night?

And I am conscious — ah, believe it still —
Cold though I seem, and passing, passing on,
Of all those upturned faces and long looks.
At times indeed it seems to me that I
Was later born than ever the sun or stars,
And that, perchance, so many faces raised,
So many ballads lone, and secret strings,
So many far, far thoughts, and spoken names
Slowly created in the heaven this arc,
And made the sadness that my being is."
He but half-heard her, and as in a trance
Murmured: she caught him upward in her arms
Dreaming, to where the sphere still paused for her,
And all the dark earth glides from under them
Floating in silent heaven together wrapped.

But now Selene feared: ocean uncharmed
Hither and thither mutinously swayed,
Earth rushed as in eclipse: the vast Design
Was conscious, muttering its Maker's name;
On Nature's brow stood out the extreme drops;
She shuddered, and experienced final cold.
Selene knew; and to Endymion said:
"Sweet, I must set thee down;" and she with him
Slid out of heaven into a valley fresh,
Far from the cities and the noise of men,
A secret place; yet open to the stars.
Here then she laid him, and said over him:
"Sweet, I must set thee down: for now I see
How cruel the eternal ways of heaven;
That only from my loneliness comes light,

That my bereavèd life this candle is.
I may not overlong approach the earth.
I had so yearned for joy; and to be loved
A little, if only such a simple love
As hath a gleaner's wife in evening hour —
Kind hands, a still and sweet anxiety,
Brave prudent talk about the coming day,
Even with this could I have been so pleased.
I had but hoped for happiness; yet this
Most natural hope estranged the faithful sea,
Eclipsed the earth, brought Nature near to death.
Those then who bear the torch may not expect
Sweet arms, nor touches, no, nor any home
But brilliant wanderings and bright exile.
Here then I lay thee down, far, far from men,

LIBRARY ST. MARY'S COLLEGE

And to the sky return: but yet at times,
Ah! yet at times, I still must visit thee,
Incline and touch thee swiftly at midnight.
And lest thy face like any face should be
Buried away, and I should only feel
With melancholy mouth a grassy mound;
I give thee immortality, for I
Will suffer not my darling to decay."
Then said Endymion: "After that high kiss,
After that sorrow more supreme than joy,
That floating in Imagination's heaven,
How should I live again in earthly field?
After thy dimness, what to me is light?
After thy kiss, I feel I cannot die.
Then suffer me immortally to dream."
"So be it then. Dream on, Endymion,"
She answered, "and at deep of midnight I

Will lean and kiss thee: thou shalt feel my kiss
In deepest dream; and I shall hear thy lips
Distinct into the quiet say my name,
And yet, sweet boy, think not that in this dream
Thou shalt not suffer, for thy trance shall be
More quivering intense than waking hour.
Cities shall be in it, and like to clouds
White dynasties subsiding and rebuilt
In blue eternity: though closed thine eyes,
Never had mortal such deep sight as thine.
Though deaf thine ear, thunder shall be in it,
Trumpets, and sound of snow, and note of birds,
Lashed caverns and the earliest lisp of babes;
Thou shalt with all rejoice and weep and die

For ever; though the dream hold on its course."

She spoke; and they two slowly drew apart,
He, faint already with that endless dream,
Where such as he must live far-off from men,
Yet thrilled with all the arrows of mankind;
And she who had descended to inspire,
Not suffered overlong to touch the earth,
Departed to her own throne and her place.
Nature respired, and reassured herself:
Delighted ocean on his mistress fawned,
Who from rejection grown more radiant,
Passed, and in purer moonlight lapped the earth.

And so she keeps her light and he his dream.

GRIEF AND GOD

Unshunnable is grief; we should not fear
The dreadful bath whose cleansing is so clear;
For He who to the Spring such poison gave,
Who rears his roses from the hopeless grave;
Who caused the babe to wail at the first
breath,
But with a rapture seals the face of death;
Who circled us with pale aspiring foam,
With exiled Music yearning for her home,
With knockings early and with cryings late,
The moving of deep waters against Fate;
Who starred the skies with yearning with
those fires,

That dart through dew their infinite desires;
Or largely silent and so wistful bright
Direct a single look of love all night;
Who gave unto the Moon that hopeless quest,
Condemned the wind to wander without rest;
He, as I think, intends that we shall rise
Only through pain into His Paradise.
Woe! woe! to those who placidly suspire,
Drowned in security, remote from fire;
Who under the dim sky and whispering trees
By peaceful slopes and passing streams have ease;
Whose merit is their uncommitted sins,
Whose thought is heinous, but they shun the gins
And those o'erflowering pits that take the strong,

PRESENTED TO ST MARY'S
BY REV. T. CALLAGHAN

The baited sweetness and the honeyed wrong;
Who watched the falling yet who never fell,
Shadows not yet ascended into Hell.
No sacred pang disturbs their secular life,
Eluding splendour and escaping strife;
They die not, for they lived not; under earth
Their bodies urge the meaner flowers to birth:
Unstung, unfired, untempted was their soul;
Easy extinction is their utmost goal.
To those whom He doth love God hath not sent
Such dread security, such sad content;
Young are they carried to the font of pain,
In coldest anguish dipped again, again;
Or else into His burning are they led,
Desirous of His glory to be dead;
When He descends, like Semele they die,

Proud to be shrivelled in His ecstasy;
Or through the night of life they ebb and flow
Under the cold imperial Moon of woe.
Some of His favourites are too fiercely wrought
To spend upon the sunny earth a thought,
But ever by an inward peril driven,
Neglect the gleaming grass and glimmering heaven.
'And some by thorny sweetness are betrayed,
By beauty of those bodies He hath made;
'And some o'er wearied, have so tired a head,
They ask like children to be laid in bed.
But He hath branded on such souls His name,
'And He will know them by the scars of flame.
'As Christ in the dark garden had to drink

The brimming cup from which His soul did shrink;

As Dante had to thread the world of fire,

Ere he approached the Rose of his desire;

So fear not grief, fear not the anguish, thou,

The paining heart, the clasped and prostrate brow;

This is the emblem, and this is the sign

By which God singles thee for fields divine;

From such a height He stoops, from such a bliss,

Small wonder thou dost shudder at His kiss.

CITIES OF HELL

I

I FELL into a trance: my spirit passed
Beyond the boundaries of the earth, until
I paused upon some dismal height, and gazed.
Beneath me vast and various cities lay;
Cities of earth they seemed, resurgent here.

II

Familiar, as I gazed, they grew, and clear:
London discolouring the rolling clouds;
Next Paris in sunbeams, then moonlit Rome;
Last Babylon abandoned to great stars:
These I beheld rebuilded upon space.

III

Down to that other London with slow pace
Venturing, I into a chamber came,
Where breathed a man, as after murder, fast,
In fury bent above a woman; she,
New-murdered, listless to me turned her head.

IV

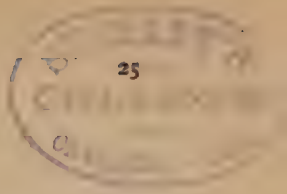
Then said I to the woman: "Being dead,
Why in this tragic London chamber still
Linger you?" She made answer: "He who stares
With everlasting fury in my face
Within this room in frenzy murdered me.

V

"Such power hath passion upon stones that he
Transported into space the very walls,
The hour, the room, this bed where still I
droop.
Hither at death we naturally came,
Inheriting the home that moment built.

VI

"Nothing is changed — nothing; his furious
guilt
Detains this chamber fast, and bids it stand.
Ah, God! the twilight star without, the branch
Rustling, the long white cloud upon the sky,
By his magnetic rage do still cohere.



VII

"O listen, friend! Dost thou not even hear
The running of the river through the arch,
The very breeze with gentleness of rain?
Then, how it sighed! Now it hath passed
away.
The softest noises of that hour endure.

VIII

"Our spirits to these walls hath he bound
sure;
We, murderer and murdered, private live.
Millions have hither hurled the hour, the place,
The scenery of their sins: so rises here
Another London and a second Rome.

IX

"Oh, if thou marvellest at this earthly home,
This rustle of earthly foliage after death,
This pattering of rain beyond the grave,
Then tremble! Nothing done, or said, or thought,
Shall ever perish: none can ever die."

X

"Is there no hope, then? Must you two," said I,
"Spend in this earthly room eternal years?"
"I have forgiven him; my part is done,"
She answered: "if but once his rage subside,
Straight would these walls dissolve, releasing us."

XI

Listless again, when she had spoken thus,
She grew; that other breathing fast I heard.
Then sudden as a child I cried for earth:
Down rushing, I was 'ware at last of waves,
Then spires; and to the body I returned.

MIDNIGHT — THE 31ST OF DECEMBER 1900

Lo! now on the midnight the soul of the century passing,
And on midnight the voice of the Lord!
"In the years that have been I have made an oblivion for anguish,
And stillness in place of a cry;
I have lain round the knife as a numbness, on nerves as an ether,
I am He that hath healed," saith the Lord.
"I have fallen as a veil upon woe, as a slumber on sorrow,
As a blank on the reeling brain.

In the years that have been I have shown me a
smoother of pillows,
A closer of fixed eyes.
In the years that shall be I will come as an healer
to cities,
And as dew to a parchèd land.
In that day shall the Northern City, the country
of iron,
Lapse into living green,
And the city of furnaces fade, the city of wheels,
The city of the white faces,
The griding city, the city of gongs and of
hammers,
Whose floor is of embers and ashes.
And her in whose soul the iron hath entered,
whose bosom
Is filled with a fatal milk,

Whose spirit fainteth in greyness of lead, and whose yearning
Hath died in a phosphorus mist,
I will lead out of hissing and venomous travail and vapour
To a city spacious and clear.
And I will abolish utterly smoke and confusion,
On roaring will set my feet;
On the wailing whistle of engines, the tunnelled shrieking,
The groaning labour of steam;
On the houses with windows as eyes that stare yet see not
The forlorn, the endless vistas.
I will make me a city of gliding and wide-wayed silence,

With a highway of glass and of gold,
With life of a coloured peace and a lucid leisure
Of smooth electrical ease;
Of sweet excursion of noiseless and brilliant travel,
With room in your streets for the soul.
And that blistering wind that maketh the heart to withdraw,
And the spirit to flinch from love,
Ye shall change it to balm, and the South-wind shall blow in your houses
The rainy soul of the rose.
And a charm ye shall take from the ebbing and flowing of ocean
That shall make the night as the day.
And the storèd strength of the tides ye shall use for your labour,

And bind it to tasks and to toil.
Yet forget not the beauty of night in her coming and going,
Forget not the sprinkled vault,
Nor eve with her floating bird and her lonely star,
Nor the reddening clouds of the eve;
Forget not the moon of the poet, nor stars of the dreamer,
Though ye live like to spirits in ease.

"In the years that have been I have bound man closer to man,
And closer woman to woman;
And the stranger hath seen in a stranger his brother at last,
And a sister in eyes that were strange.

In the years that shall be I will bind me nation
to nation
And shore unto shore," saith our God.
"For this cause I will make of your warfare a
terrible thing,
A thing impossible, vain;
For a man shall set his hand to a handle and
wither
Invisible armies and fleets,
And a lonely man with a breath shall exterminate
armies,
With a whisper annihilate fleets;
And the captain shall sit in his chamber and
level a city,
The far-off capital city.
Then the Tsar that dreameth in snow and
broodeth in winter,

That foilèd dreamer in frost,
And the Teuton Emperor then, and the Gaul and the Briton
Shall cease from impossible war,
Discarding their glittering legions, armadas of iron,
As children toys that are old.
As a man hath been brought, I will bring unto judgment a nation;
Nor shall numbers be pleaded for sin.
And that people to whom I gave in commission the ocean
To use my waters for right,
Let them look to the inward things, to the searching of spirit,
And cease from boasting and noise.
Then nation shall cleave unto nation, and Babel shall fall:

They shall speak in a common tongue,
And the soul of the Gaul shall leap to the soul of the Briton
Through all disguises and shows;
And soul shall speak unto soul — I weary of tongues,
I weary of babble and strife.
Lo! I am the bonder and knitter together of spirits,
I dispense with nations and shores.

"In the years that have been, in the rocks I have shown ye a record
And a ledger in layers of chalk;
I have shown ye a book and a diary faithful in caverns,
An account in the depths of the earth.

When ye swayed to and fro as a jelly in ooze
of the ocean,
I foresaw, I determined, I planned.
And I brooded on primal ooze as a mother
broodeth,
And slime as a cradle I watched.
When ye hung on the branches of trees, when
ye swung and ye chattered,
I made ready, prepared and decreed
That in years that should be I would bring ye
with patience through æons,
From slime through the forest to bliss;
I would wean ye from climbings and fury to
wings and to wisdom,
From dark sea-stupor to life.

"In the years that have been I have broken
the barriers to knowledge,
I have shattered your barriers and bars;
I have led, like steeds from a stable, Forces and
Powers,
I have bidden ye mount them and ride.
In the years that shall be ye shall harness the
Powers of the æther
And drive them with reins as a steed;
Ye shall ride on a Power of the air, on a Force
that is bridled,
On a saddled Element leap;
And rays shall be as your coursers, and heat as
a carriage,
And waves of the æther your wheels;
And the thunder shall be as a servant, a slave
that is ready,

And the lightning as he that waits.

Ye shall send on your business the blast, and the tempest on errands,

Ye shall use for your need, Eclipse.

In that day shall a man out of uttermost India whisper,

And in England his friend shall hear;

And a maid in an English meadow have sight of her lover

Who wanders in far Cathay.

In that day shall ye walk to and fro on the sea without terror,

And pace without fear the foam,

As a field of the evening the Mediterranean lying,

The Atlantic a lawn for your feet.

ST. MARY
BY REV. T. CALLAGH

"Yet remember the ancient things, the things that have been,
And meekly inherit the Earth!
And or ever those days be ended, the veil shall be rent—
The veil upon Nature's face.
And the dead whom ye loved, ye shall walk with, and speak with the lost.
The delusion of Death shall pass:
The delusion of mounded earth, the apparent withdrawal.
The snare of sightlessness fade.
Ye shall shed your bodies, and upward shall flutter to freedom,
For a moment consent to the ground.
Lo! I am the burster of bonds and the breaker of barriers—
I am He that shall free," saith the Lord.

"For the lingering battle, the contest of ages is ending,
And victory followeth Me.
They set them in order of battle, they ranged them against Me—
Chaos and Anguish and Time
And Madness and Hunger and Sorrow and Night and the Grave—
But victory followeth Me.
Lo! I come, I hasten, I set my procession in order,
In order of triumph I come;
At the wheels of my chariot pacing, like alien captives,
Anguish and Time and Death,
To a multitude out of the uttermost spheres assembled,
With a shout of delivered stars."

A POET'S PRAYER

THAT I have felt the rushing wind of Thee:
That I have run before thy blast to sea;
That my one moment of transcendent strife
Is more than many years of listless life;
Beautiful Power, I praise Thee: yet I send
A prayer that sudden strength be not the end.

Desert me not when from my flagging sails
Thy breathing dies away, and virtue fails:
When Thou hast spent the glory of that gust,
Remember still the body of this dust.
Not then when I am boundless, without bars,
When I am rapt in hurry to the stars;

When I anticipate an endless bliss,
And feel before my time the final kiss,
Not then I need Thee: for delight is wise,
I err not in the freedom of the skies;
I fear not joy, so joy might ever be,
And rapture finish in felicity.
But when Thy joy is past, comes in the test,
To front the life that lingers after zest:
To live in mere negation of Thy light,
A more than blindless after more than sight.
'T is not in flesh so swiftly to descend,
And sudden from the spheres with earth to blend;
And I, from splendour thrown, and dashed from dream,
Into the flare pursue the former gleam.

Sustain me in that hour with Thy left hand,
And aid me, when I cease to soar, to stand;
Make me Thy athlete even in my bed,
Thy girded runner though the course be sped;
Still to refrain that I may more bestow,
From sternness to a larger sweetness grow.
I ask not that false calm which many feign,
And call that peace which is a dearth of pain.
True calm doth quiver like the calmest star;
It is that white where all the colours are;
And for its very vestibule doth own
The tree of Jesus and the pyre of Joan.
Thither I press: but O do Thou meanwhile
Support me in privations of Thy smile.
Spaces Thou hast ordained the stars between,
And silences where melody hath been:

Teach me those absences of fire to face,
And Thee no less in silence to embrace,
Else shall Thy dreadful gift still people Hell,
And men not measure from what height I fell.

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

I

Not taken scythe in hand from field half-reaped,
Not early stolen in thy wine of May,
Not lingering on to death through life eclipsed
But fortunately old, in fragrant fame,
Thou from the Sun hast passed into the dark.

II

Warrior with deep unwillingness to wound,
Smiter that ne'er didst learn the art to stab,
Exquisite knight, so gentle to the end;
Of chivalry antique and gracious words:
Foeman, with sweetness of an elder day.

III

Not in the press of war didst thou go down,
But seeing death was near, thou didst retire;
Preparing as a runner for that course,
That final struggle, and that different field,
With pain preparing and with solemn care.

IV

The saint and poet dwell apart; but thou
Wast holy in the furious press of men,
And choral in the central rush of life.
Yet didst thou love old branches and a book,
And Roman verses on an English lawn.

V

Thy voice had all the roaring of the wave,
And hoarse magnificence of rushing stones;

It had the murmur of Ionian bees,
And the persuading sweetness of a shower.
Clarion of God! thy ringing peal is o'er!

VI

Yet not for all thy breathing charm remote,
Nor breach tremendous in the forts of Hell,
Not for these things we praise thee, though these things
Are much; but more, because thou didst discern
In temporal policy the eternal will;

VII

Thou gav'st to party strife the epic note,
And to debate the thunder of the Lord;

To meanest issues fire of the Most High.
Hence eyes that ne'er beheld thee now are
dim,
And alien men on alien shores lament.

A GLEAM!

Ah! You and I love our boy!
Such a warrior is he;
So splendid of limb, so swift and so joyous,
At his lightest word we touch each other and smile;
We watch him secretly, earnestly, out of the shadow,
Our eyes like angels attend him about the room.
Ah! You and I love our boy!
And yet when we wander out in the falling darkness,
When the glooming garden discloses her soul in dew,

In that hour of odour and longing,

Of voices ceasing in leaves,

When a human trouble arises from evening meadows,

A divine home-sickness from heaped grass,

Then I know that it is not of him you are thinking sorely,

But still you remember the other, the girl-child that vanished.

Scarce had we kissed her with awe, when she died;

We but named her, and lost her.

And they say to us, "Why, O why,

With yon beautiful boy in your sight,

Do ye still hark back to the other face that is fled?"

But because of her swiftness in passing,

COLL

Because she just smiled, and died;
She moveth us more than the other to tender
thought,
And the wistful puzzle of tears.
I shall know, ere the sun arises,
By a sudden stirring of thee,
Or blind slight touch in the dark,
Or face upturnèd in quivering dream,
That your heart, like mine, has gone home in
the hush to its dead,
Through dew and beginning birds;
Unto her hath returned,
Who dazzled, and left us to darkness,
But a beam, but a gleam!

THE QUEST OF EDITH

A CLOUDED moon was on the Field of Blood,
And dew was falling down upon the dead,
When to the high pavilion of the duke,
Who on the battle-ridge did eat and drink,
Two women, hooded and slow stepping, stole.
On to the dark-browed conqueror they came,
And she, the elder, kneeling, touched his hand.
Then said he, "Who art thou?" She answered him,
"Knew'st thou not by my touch I am his mother?
Sir, I have come unto thee for my son
Harold, the King: to beg of thee his body,

That I may bury it with solemn rite.
Five sons I had; and all to-night are dead:
My wild Sweyn over seas; and Tostig next
Fell with Hardrada on the Northern moor;
Now Harold, Gurth, and Leofwin at once
All slain: a little thing I ask of thee,
Now all those boys I loved lie without breath,
To take my dearest up into my arms,
And carefully to lay him in the earth."
She ended, and bowed her o'er that dreadful hand.
But he, the humming battle in his ear,
And in his eyes the blood, thus answered her:
"Untombed let lie the accursèd of the Church,
And on his flesh the raven glut her young!"
Then she, the taller, she of the swan-neck,

Edith the fair, the blown lily of England,
Flung back her hood and on the conqueror flamed
A sudden angel in the banquet lights,
In rolling glory of dishevelled hair.
Her beauty made a darkness in the place,
The blood-bespattered knights forgetting wine
None stirred: but all men wondered and sighed once.
Outspoke that virgin with the widowed eyes,
Collecting in herself a people's grief:
"Norman, thou durst not so demean the brave,
Who England loved, and Edith, and England first:
Who tarried not by fierce Hardrada's corse,
Nor lingered while ye plundered his dear land,
But from the North in anger came on you,

And stood up with his battle-axe, and clove
The gathered chivalry of many realms;
The arrow and no army overcame him."
Then was the conqueror troubled by her words,
And swelling breast, where Harold's head had lain,
His captains all about him murmuring praise,
And he, repenting of unworthy speech,
Said, "Who art thou that speakest without fear?"
She answered, "I am she whom Harold loved,
And who loved Harold: now I do but ask
That I may have his body to bury it."
Then to the woman spoke the movèd Duke:
"Lady, depart; take with thee whom thou wilt,
And find thy dead out from among the dead,

And bury him with music and with rite
Duly:" and those two passing out beheld
The lifeless armies under cloudy moon!
And no man to another spoke a word.
Two priests, who had loved Harold, through
the dark
The burning women with pale torches lit.
How many a night so dark had Edith once
Tarried for him to whom she hurried now!
So she went swiftly on before those three;
And as a lady through her garden goes
Ruined around her by a night of storm,
To save a single flower that she had loved,
Brushing the other blooms that drip in the sun,
So went she wistful over the bowed field,
Looking through all those faces for a face.
— But thou, to save thy rose, art come too late. —

ST. MARY'S COLL
BY REV. T. CALLAGHAN

And here a fixed eye regarding her,
Or at her feet a dead youth with bright hair,
Surprised her, seeming young in such a place,
Or suddenly illumed on the dark hill
A motionless horse, an old and cloven head!
The silence too that followed on such sound
Appalled her; silence closer to the soul
Than hush of Arctic field in wrapping snow,
Or supreme Himalaya in sunrise;
A silence that had heard; as of some sea
A hoar and haunted surge whither are blown
Under the stars wild sails of long ago.
Now following Edith other ladies came,
Hoping to find some husband or some son,
— One led a little child about the field —
Wives that a moonbeam might to widows change,

And mothers whom the passing of a cloud
Might instantly bereave for evermore.
But those they quested had disguised them well,
Piled indiscoverable in their blood,
Ensanguined, scarred, distorted, trampled, strewn.
So rough the work of war that scarcely she,
Who with her lord had lain for many a year,
Sat with him at his board, and in his hall,
And watched his face in silence out of shadow,
And learned him in the gathering twilight well;
Scarce she who had borne unto him many children,
She, even, might find him out in such a field.
There, not that mother who in prayer had fallen

Beside the starry beds of dreaming babes,
Had hovered o'er their youth, and hived their words,
And seen with twitching mouth their earliest rage,
Might lightly know those children of her sighs;
A sister might her brother see and pass him.
And yet at times from the still field arose
A far-off "Oh," or a shrill single cry;
Even a name, uttered, and then no more.
But now the three lacked Edith in the night,
Waving their torches hither and thither: she
Had stolen off upon a secret trail,
Lured by her wounded darling through the dark,
Or called by the dead man in silent voice
Across the field: no use had she for torch,

Her own eyes lit the woman to her love,
And her own heart guided her certain feet.
They groping doubtful, ever hesitating,
Stumbling beneath the glimmer over the slain,
At last perceived her busy, and alone;
With difficulty lifting armèd limbs.
Corse after corse she moves but never him.
Suddenly with a cry deferring dawn
She flew upon a form that none might know
Save she; those priests, with torches leaning close,
And well remembering their beloved king,
Knew not that shape from recognition hewn,
Harold by Senlac altered so: even she
Who bore him looked on him and knew him not.
But Edith doubted not: Ah! by what sign,

And holy between undivided hearts,
Grew she so certain of that marrèd face,
And the mown beauty of tall manhood? Yet
She chose it out for all the stains and blows,
Not any scar did trouble her true soul, —
And as she streamed above him in her hair,
And with her long hair wiped away the blood,
Using those yellow tresses he had loved,
Over her issued clean the autumn moon.
Even the moon, so used to mortal woe,
To gazing on death-bed, and battle-field,
Herself the brilliant candle of our sorrow,
Herself the restless glory of this grief,
Was troubled by the woman in mid-sky.
But Edith held that to her which was Harold;
Nor was aware of those two standing priests,
Nor mother in a paler grief retired,

Nor of those ladies with their burdens who,
As laden women from the harvest field
Returning, pass beside one busy still,
Past her returned: nor now was she aware
Of moon or dew: the sting, the sword was here,
The cup, the burning crown, the robe of blood,
And the great Earth a shadow: while she lay
In dreadful bliss of sad possession wrapt.
But those three now in gentle dread withdrew
Out of the solemn sorrow; yet they watched,
Until the holy night had faded off,
And a breeze fluttered, and the world grew cold,
All those uplifted faces glimmering!
At last the woman leaned above the man,

And kissed him full upon the lips: and day
Dawned: in the light her heart broke, and she
died.

In one grave were they buried by the sea,
Coming together, though in dust at last;
And when the tide has turned, steadily flows
Over and over them the English foam,
The Sea permitting what the Church forbade.

DREYFUS

O Country of the unconquerable Dream!
O ever true in darkness to the Gleam!
France! that didst never count the cost of right,
Rewaken in thy frenzy for the light!
Like lovers, we will not believe thee base,
But speak hot words and passion to thy face.
Be swift and terrible, as thou wert of old!
Thou art not France, if once thou canst be cold!
O by that soldier whom thou could'st not shake,
That ever-breaking heart thou could'st not break;

That dying body that refused the dust,
That solitary brain that would not rust;
With Suicide an opiate put by,
And Madness a rejected luxury;
And by that woman sleepless for a sail,
That widow with no grave whereon to wail;
By all the flaming injury, and sense
Of most intolerable innocence;
Arise! Arise! O be thou swift and fell!
Of burning liars be thyself the hell!
Or fling them far on that accursed isle!
Deep waters put between thee and their guile!
Hasten to purge thee, France! to make thee pure;
Or seek in sternest surgery thy cure!
Else that pale Jew, how like to Him that dies

In marble on the walls before their eyes.[1]
Shall haunt thee as that Other haunts mankind,
And thee in sleepless night for ever bind.

[1] On the walls of the Court at Rennes hangs the marble figure of a dying Christ.

THAT SHE REPENT!

Thy vengeance, God of old, upon the Gaul!
For retribution as for rain we call!
Is there not passion where Thy tempests roll,
Or in Thy thunder some tremendous soul?
We praise Thy patience of the growing hour,
Thy wisdom gradual that brings the flower;
But sudden intervention now we pray,
And flaming ire as in the elder day!
Thou that didst rush to war, Thou more than Mars!
Didst lead 'gainst Sisera the armèd stars;
Thou that in ancient day didst hear, didst see,
When Pharaoh would not set Thy people free;

Lord of the darkness upon Egypt sent;
That darkness hurl on France, that she repent!
That plague upon her pour, and bend that bow,
That she may let the child of Israel go!

AFTER RAIN

After rain, after rain,

O sparkling Earth!

All things are new again,

Bathed as at birth.

Now the pattering sound hath ceased,

Drenched and released

Upward springs the glistening bough

In sunshine now;

And the raindrop from the leaf

Runs and slips;

Ancient forests have relief,

Young foliage drips.

All the Earth doth seem

Like Dian issuing from the stream,
Her body flushing from the wave,
Glistening in her beauty grave;
Down from her as she doth pass
Little rills run to the grass:
Or like perhaps to Venus, when she rose,
And looked with dreamy stare across the sea,
As yet unconscious of the woes,
The woes, and all the wounds that were to be.
Or now again,
After the rain,
Earth like that early garden shines
Vested in vines.
O green green
Eden is seen!
After weeping skies
Rising Paradise;

Umbrage twinkling new
'Gainst the happy blue,
God there for His pleasure,
In divinest leisure,
Walking in the sun
Which hath lately run;
While the bird sings clear and plain
Behind the bright withdrawing rain.
Soon I shall perceive
Naked glimmering Eve,
Startled by the shower,
Venture from her bower,
Looking for Adam under perilous sky;
While he hard by
Emerges from the slowly dropping blooms,
And warm delicious glooms.

A MAN!

I

O FOR a living man to lead!
That will not babble when we bleed;
O for the silent doer of the deed!

II

One that is happy in his height;
And one that, in a nation's night,
Hath solitary certitude of light!

III

Sirs, not with battle ill-begun
We charge you, not with fields unwon
Nor headlong deaths against the darkened gun;

IV

But with a lightness worse than dread;
That you but laughed, who should have led,
And tripped like dancers amid all our dead.

V

You for no failure we impeach,
Nor for those bodies in the breach,
But for a deeper shallowness of speech.

VI

When every cheek was hot with shame,
When we demanded words of flame,
O ye were busy but to shift the blame!

VII

No man of us but clenched his hand,
No brow but burned us with a brand,
You! you alone were slow to understand!

VIII

O for a living man to lead!
That will not babble when we bleed;
O for the silent doer of the deed!

EARTH-BOUND

THOUGH from the body I am past,
Still to Earth I am bound fast;
Immortal voices call me low
I may not go;
But like a bird out of the night
Beat ever in on this warm light.
I heard an angel say
"Come away!"
I answered "Let me bide
"Where I have died;
"Near to the blowing grass and Sun,
"Where I have run."
And then I said

"'T is dreary to be dead,

"And watch the budding lane,

"And hear the rain:

"To pine about the green,

"And haunt the sheen.

"O rare, rare,

"Are human faces, and still fair!"

Spirit am I, but cannot yet

Go from these ancient pastures wet;

Though from the body I am past,

Still to Earth I am bound fast.

THE SON

I

O WHY is your hate of me so deep,
Father?
I grieve so that I may not sleep
For thinking how to turn your heart;
And up in cruel wonder start.

II

Although this body's strong to bear,
Father!
I droop and falter round your chair;
Stand like a woman at your knees
In deep anxiety to please.

III

Why is the look refused me quite,

Father!

That on my brother dwells like light?

At evening when the room is dim

Your shining eyes roam after him.

IV

When I come near your lip is set,

Father!

With something you can ne'er forget.

What 's vile in him, you think it strong;

What 's good in me, you make it wrong.

V

O when my heart, the labour done,

Father!

Is homing toward the setting sun;
Out of the glory and the gold
I enter, and your face is cold.

VI

When you were near to death, you said,
Father!
"See that he comes not near my bed!"
I stood on the dark stair alone,
And swayed about to hear you moan.

VII

Will something ever 'tween us stand,
Father?
Too deep for me to understand?
Even in the womb you hated me,
When I was dumb and might not see.

VIII

When first I blinked at this great light,
Father!
Your hate of me was blinding bright;
And with the air I felt your scorn
When first I shivered to be born.

IX

O since I can no way abate,
Father!
Your steady and enduring hate;
Then strike me dead! When you shall see
My very blood, you 'll pity me.

THOUGHTS AT SUNRISE

The summer night is waning, and the morn
Breaks over steaming streams and silent fields,
With dim, far voices of the early dawn.
God and his world are now at peace; this calm,
Even now, might deepen to Eternity.
Oh, break it not! oh, stain it not! O God,
Stay thou that rising Sun, nor let him rise
Once more upon the weary sin and strife,
And cries that curse him thro' the burning blue!
Come hither, O ye sons of men! and kneel, —
Pray to a God ye never prayed to yet,

Who in his wide and wistful tenderness
Maketh each day the self-same dawn that broke
On Eden, — that, remembering what ye were,
The Dawn's sweet innocence might call ye back, —
An awful, mute appeal to turn again.
Nay, but he suffers in that Heaven of heavens.
About him are the deeps, Space, with her sounds,
The Heaven, with all her dreams of star and sun,
The singing of a thousand worlds; to him
Serene, immortal beings bow them low.
All these are perfect, yet he hears afar,
In that dim, little planet that he loves,
Man jarring ever on his harmonies.

PRESENTED TO ST. MARY'S COLLEGE LIBRARY
BY REV. T. CALLAGHAN

Aye, yearning in his cold and perfect worlds
For Man who might have sympathy with him,
Move with conceptions vast and burning
thoughts
From beauty unto beauty, peopling worlds,
He grieves, though not the less a God for
grief.
Man is all out of tune with his design,
Who might have shared in that first splendid
thought,
Conception striving with an utter Space,
Sound with eternal still that knew her not,
And light with the vague dark, till at the last
He struck his vast conception into bounds.
Still makes he for mankind the innocent dawn,
Noon, twilight, and the night, that makes the
heart

Break into singing at her shining stars.
Yet is man but a trembling worshipper,
Who heeds not that deep cry from Calvary —
A God appealing to the love of man,
With those stretched arms that would embrace a world —
That should have echoed in him, made the earth
One fearless Heaven, without a thought of Hell, —
Man, who can learn not through defeat and death
Sorrow's last gift, a sympathy with God.

"MARTINI LUIGI IMPLORA PACE"

Had'st thou in all the brightness won
Such dark experience of the sun,
That in the Roman violets wet
Above thy head these words are set,
"Martini Luigi asks for peace"?

Wast thou too sanguine, and too frail,
To watch the glory fade and pale?
Was it some long decline of trust
That sadly wrote above thy dust,
"Martini Luigi asks for peace"?

Or was it, in the dew of life,
Some sudden hurt from friend or wife
That ached till thou could'st only die,
And wrung from thee at last the cry,
"Martini Luigi asks for peace"?

Or wast thou, like some happy child,
That plays, and builds, and is beguiled;
Then, weary of its lovely toys,
And half-fatigued with simple joys,
Drowsily, fretful, asks for peace?

Whate'er the cause, thy prayer is mine:
I for the perfect slumber pine;
I crave no city in the skies,
Or Patmian dreamer's paradise;
Only, like thee, I ask for peace.

THE TORTURERS

[Suggested by a letter to the "Daily Chronicle" from the author of "The Ballad of Reading Gaol."]

THE key is turned; before my eyes
The garnished torture-chamber lies:
A burnished place, without a stain,
With speckless galleries of pain;
The moody torturers behind,
Th' experienced wreckers of the mind.
O then their hellish task began,
To madden me their fellow man;
To take a human creature fair,
Then loose an idiot to the air.
'T was God who said "Let there be light!"
But they restore the dreadful night;

The instruments of chaos, they
Roll back the gloom upon His day.

The merest darkness did they find
To wrap my solitary mind;
So deep, that I no more believed,
Nor hoped; but fearfully conceived
That I God's creature had been hurled,
Out of his scheme, to a blank world,
Where no thing grew, nor was there sound,
Only a blackness without bound;
Even Christ in such a gulph was blind,
And groped for me, but could not find.
Yet saw I on the ebon night
Roses that dripped with raindrops bright,
I saw the green Atlantic swell
With slow bright dance within my cell.

Roses and ocean disappeared,
And then the darkness worse I feared.
At last one called me as from dawn,
And I on him was swift to fawn,
And by such terror was unmanned,
I could have kissed that cruel hand.
Eternal hunger did they use
My reason slowly to confuse;
And to the grave they kept me nigh,
Yet would not let me wholly die:
Ever half-in, half-out of death,
I drew a calculated breath;
My eyes from slumber did they keep,
Eyes that had earned eternal sleep.

Such humbleness as none should feel
I felt; and to a man would kneel;

Before him like a brute would lie,
And lift to him a shifting eye.
My wife to view her husband came;
I was inured to every shame:
Caged like an ape, my antics played.
Until she fled from me afraid.
No more can I recall, until,
When on me they had worked their will,
I slowly climbed the winding stair,
And drifted helpless through the air.

THOUGHTS IN A MEADOW

O WHY in this breathing field, this meadow of Maytime,
A-flurry with silverous gusts;
Why, O my soul, must thou still with a sadness behold it:
Strangely disturbed from far?
And why is thy bliss never simple and never entire?
What hinders thee so to be gay?
O soul, hadst thou waked on a world but newly created;
If thou wert the first that had breathed;

Then this brooding arch of the blue were
beautiful merely,
Perfect the greenness of grass.
But ah, through thine eyes unnumbered dead
ones are peering;
To the windows the phantoms throng;
Those millions of perished women, and poets
and lovers,
Gaze where thou gazest and breathe;
And by ghosts is the blowing meadow-land
unforgotten;
Memories deepen the blue.
So through tears not our own is the sunset
strangely pathetic;
And splendid with thoughts not ours.
So feel we from far-off hills a soft invitation,
A divine beckon and call.

At the sudden mysterious touch of a stranger
we tremble;
At lightning from eyes in a crowd;
And a child will sorrow at evening bells over
meadows,
And grieve by the breaking sea.
O never alone can we gaze on the blue and the
greenness;
Others are gazing and sigh;
And never alone can we listen to twilight
music;
Others listen and weep,
And the woman that sings in the dimness to
millions is singing;
Not to thee, O my soul, alone.

THE DREAMING MUSE

No Muse will I invoke; for she is fled!
Lo! where she sits, breathing, yet all but dead!
She loved the heavens of old, she thought them fair;
And dream'd of Gods in Tempe's golden air.
For her the wind had voice, the sea its cry;
She deem'd heroic Greece could never die.
Breathless was she, to think what nymphs might play
In clear green depths, deep-shaded from the day;
She thought the dim and inarticulate god
Was beautiful, nor knew she man a clod;

But hoped what seem'd might not be all
untrue,
And feared to look beyond the eternal blue.
But now the heavens are bared of dreams
divine.
Still murmurs she, like Autumn, *This was*
mine !
How should she face the ghastly, jarring Truth,
That questions all, and tramples without ruth?
And still she clings to Ida of her dreams,
And sobs, *Ah! let the world be what it seems!*
Then the shy nymph shall softly come again;
The world, once more, make music for her
pain.
For, sitting in the dim and ghostly night,
She fain would stay the strong approach of
light;

While later bards cleave to her, and believe
That in her sorrow she can still conceive!
Oh, let her dream; still lovely is her sigh:
Oh, rouse her not, or she shall surely die.

TO A LOST LOVE

I CANNOT look upon thy grave,
  Though there the rose is sweet:
Better to hear the long wave wash
  These wastes about my feet!

Shall I take comfort? Dost thou live
  A spirit, though afar,
With a deep hush about thee, like
  The stillness round a star?

Oh, thou art cold! In that high sphere
  Thou art a thing apart,
Losing in saner happiness
  This madness of the heart.

And yet, at times, thou still shalt feel
A passing breath, a pain;
Disturb'd, as though a door in heaven
Had oped and closed again.

And thou shalt shiver, while the hymns,
The solemn hymns, shall cease;
A moment half remember me:
Then turn away to peace.

But oh, for evermore thy look,
Thy laugh, thy charm, thy tone,
Thy sweet and wayward earthliness
Dear trivial things, are gone!

Therefore I look not on thy grave,
Though there the rose is sweet;
But rather hear the loud wave wash
These wastes about my feet.

ORESTES

Me in far lands did Justice call, cold queen
Among the dead, who after heat and haste
At length have leisure for her steadfast voice,
That gathers peace from the great deeps of hell.
She call'd me, saying: "I heard a cry by night!
Go thou, and question not; within thy halls
My will awaits fulfilment. Lo! the dead
Cries out before me in the under-world.
Seek not to justify thyself: in me
Be strong, and I will show thee wise in time:
For, though my face be dark, yet unto those

Who truly follow me through storm or shine,
For these the veil shall fall, and they shall see
They walked with Wisdom, though they knew
her not."
So sped I home: and from the under-world
Forever came a wind that fill'd my sails,
Cold, like a spirit: and ever her still voice
Spoke over shoreless seas and fathomless
deeps,
And in great calms, as from a colder world;
Nor slack'd I sail by day, nor yet when night
Fell on my running keel, and now would burn,
With all her eyes, my errand into me.
So sped I on, fill'd with a voice divine:
And hardly wist I whom I was to slay,
My mother! but a vague, heroic dream
Possess'd me; fired to do the will of gods,

I lost the man in minister of Heaven:
Nor took I note of sandbank, nor of storm,
Nor of the ocean's thunders, when the shores
All round had faded, leaving me alone:
I knew I could not die, till I had slain!
But, when I came once more upon the land
That rear'd me, all the sweetness of old days
Came back on me: I stood, as from a dream
Waked to a sudden, sad reality.
And when, far off, I saw those ancient towers,
The palaces and places of my youth,
I long'd to fall into my mother's arms,
And tell a thousand tales of near escapes.
And lo! the nurse that fondled me of yore,
Fell with glad tears upon my neck, and told
How she, and how my mother, all this while
Had dream'd of all I was to do, and said

How dear I should be to my mother's eyes.
Her words shook me, but shook not my resolve.
For even then there came that sterner voice,
Echoing to what was highest in the soul.
Then, like to those who have a work on earth,
And put far from them lips of wife or child,
And gird them to the accomplishment; so I
Strode in, nor saw at all mine ancient halls;
And struck my father's murderess, not my mother.
And, when I had smitten, lo! the strength of gods
Pass'd from me, and the old, familiar halls
Reel'd back on me; dim statues, that of old
Holding my mother's hand I marvell'd at,

And questioned her of each. And she lies there,
My mother! ay, my mother now; O hair
That once I play'd with in these halls! O eyes
That for a moment knew me as I came,
And lighten'd up, and trembled into love;
The next were darkened by my hand! Ah me!
Ye will not look upon me in that world.
Yet thou, perchance, art happier, if thou go'st
Into some land of wind and drifting leaves,
To sleep without a star; but as for me,
Hell hungers, and the restless Furies wait.
Then the dark Curse, that sits upon the towers
Bow'd down her awful head, thus satisfied,
And I fled forth, a murderer, through the world.

THE PARTING OF LAUNCELOT AND GUINEVERE

Into a high-walled nunnery had fled
Queen Guinevere, amid the shade to weep,
And to repent 'mid solemn boughs, and love
The cold globe of the moon; but now as she
Meekly the scarcely-breathing garden walked,
She saw, and stood, and swooned at Launcelot
Who burned in sudden steel like a blue flame
Amid the cloister. Then, when she revived,
He came and looked on her: in the dark place
So pale her beauty was, the sweetness such
That he half-closed his eyes and deeply breathed;

And as he gazed, there came into his mind
That night of May, with pulsing stars, the strange
Perfumèd darkness, and delicious guilt
In silent hour; but at the last he said:
"Suffer me, lady, but to kiss thy lips
Once, and to go away for evermore."
But she replied, "Nay, I beseech thee, go!
Sweet were those kisses in the deep of night;
But from those kisses is this ruin come.
Sweet was thy touch, but now I wail at it.
And I have hope to see the face of Christ:
Many are saints in heaven who sinned as I."
Then said he, "Since it is thy will, I go."
But those that stood around could scarce endure
To see the dolour of these two; for he

Swooned in his burning armour to her face,
And both cried out as at the touch of spears:
And as two trees at midnight, when the breeze
Comes over them, now to each other bend,
And now withdraw; so mournfully these two
Still drooped together and still drew apart.
Then like one dead her ladies bore away
The heavy queen; and Launcelot went out
And through a forest weeping rode all night.

A GIRL'S LAST WORDS

I WONDER, do they ever speak
  My name in that green home,
And silent fields beyond the streets
  And pavements that I roam?
Mother, I dread to see thy face;
  Gentle thou art, I know,
But never canst forgive me quite,
  Howe'er thy tears may flow.
My father, harder far than thou,
  I should not fear so much:
Thou art a woman — there it is —
  And couldst not bear my touch.

But I am dying: O at last
Come up the stair to me!
And smooth my pillow as of old
For the long night to be!

THOUGHTS AT NOON

The stillness and the spell of the blue noon
I drank and felt a spirit from the sun
Of deep and utter bliss steal down on me,
Steeping my brain in peace. I seemed to be
At one with the creator and at rest,
Sucking the sunbeam with no afterthought.
Surely 't is much, I said, to be alive,
To have drawn in beauty thro' the eye, the ear,
The nostril, to have breathed all wandering airs,

And seen this trembling glow, and heard, as now,
Birds warbling in aerial rivulets:
To have known these things and to thank God and die.

AT NIGHT

Sometimes a wild and glorious star
  Streams like a spirit on the pane,
And then I feel thou art not far,
  That I shall see thee once again!

Sometimes a dim, unhappy sphere
  Peers in the half-light on my bed,
And then I dream, forgive it, dear,
  That thou for evermore art fled.

Yet better far that sphere dim-furled,
  And hushed in sadness like a sign,
Than this rude dawn which brings the world
  To roar between my soul and thine.

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Yes, harder through the roar and light
To bear the loud world patiently,
Than on through all the lonely night
To suffer and remember thee.

A MOTHER

O MOTHER, that from thy pure heart each night
Sendest up prayers for me to highest God;
For me, who wander without fixèd light,
And have not faith to tread where thou hast trod;
Grieve not, though God no answer yet hath given;
He knows that mine is not a lasting doom;
Though thou be caught up into highest heaven,
And I be banished into outer gloom;
For then the aching absence of thy face
Shall work in me such swift immortal pain,

That I shall struggle through the worlds of
space
In burning hope to be with thee again.
And I shall strive for thy white purity
For fear of everlasting losing thee.

IOLE

A TRAGEDY IN ONE ACT

[*The scene is laid in the city of Corinth, at that time hotly besieged by the Spartans. On the right is the house of Pelias. On the left centre is the Temple of Juno. The time is the hour approaching sunset. The scene is unchanged throughout the Act.*]

CHARACTERS

PELIAS (*a renowned and aged Corinthian general*).

LAOMEDON (*a rich young Corinthian noble*).

PHORCOS (*a leader of the citizens of Corinth*).

AN OLD MAN.

IOLE (*daughter of* PELIAS, *betrothed to* LAOMEDON).

LEUCIPPE (*mother of* LAOMEDON).

PRIESTESS OF THE TEMPLE.

Crowd of citizens, maidens attending on IOLE, *etc.*

[*Before the rising of the curtain a sound of shouting is heard, and as it rises a crowd of Corinthian citizens is discovered clamouring before the doors of the house of Pelias. Some are armed, and women carrying babes are amongst them.*]

PHORCOS.

Pelias, Pelias, descend and help us!
Tarry not still within, to all denied,
Nursing an ancient wrath! Lo! we are come
To pray thee lay aside thy bitterness,
And lead us forth again as in old days
Against the Spartan who is at our gates.

The flying rumour of thy splendid name
Shall hearten all our friends, and shake our foes.
Hearken, grey warrior, withering within
In cold estrangement! Thou and thou alone
Canst smite the enemy and save our hearths;
Arise, then, as of old and lead us forth!
Hear us, great Pelias!

CROWD.

Hear us, Pelias!
Pelias, hear us!

[PELIAS *slowly comes out on to the steps of his house, where he stands.*]

PELIAS.

What would ye with me?

CROWD.

Deliver us from the Spartan, Pelias!

PELIAS.

You men of Corinth, on five desperate fields
This arm hath propped your city which else had fallen;
Five times in battle I delivered you.
Yet have ye suffered me to linger on
In penury, for home this rotting manse,
Which the dank ivy eats; and here I droop
Discarded to the grave. Yet, now behold,
Ye have remembered Pelias at last!
Why? For the Spartan batters at your gates.
In your prosperity I may decay,
But in your danger ye would seek me out,

Return; defend the city as ye can,
For Pelias will lead you nevermore.
To-morrow, too, my daughter Iole
Weds young Laomedon, and leaves my house
Twice desolate: this night then of all nights
I would not quit my child were Corinth falling.

[*He makes as though to go in.*]

AN OLD MAN.

On many a fierce field, Pelias, at thy side
Have I not fought? Hast thou forgot my face?

PELIAS.

No, I remember thee.

OLD MAN.

Remember, then,

How thy dead wife did love this city, how
Here she was born, and here she wedded thee.
Would she not urge thee once more to the field,
Fearing the doom of her belovèd towers,
And walls and olden winding ways of home?
For her sake, not for ours, come down and help us!

[*A shout of triumph is heard from the wall.*]

Hark, how the Spartan triumphs!

CROWD.

Pelias,
Pelias, help us!

PELIAS (*moved*).

Not for Corinth then,
But for one buried woman I do here

Repent. [*Cries of joy.*] But I will question first
the goddess
If I shall prosper in the shock of spears.
[*He goes and stands on the steps of the temple.*]
Goddess, vouchsafe me answer: If I go
Forth to the battle, shall I save the city,
[*The Priestess appears.*]
Or is the doom of Corinth fallen on her?

PRIESTESS.

Thus saith the goddess, queen of the wide
heavens,
"Hear, Pelias! If thou goest forth to battle,
Thou shalt deliver the city with thy sword.
[*Great shout of joy.*]
But one thing is required of thee: that thou,

When thou returnest bright from victory,
Shalt slay in sacrifice whatever first
Shall meet thee coming forth out of thy doors."

PELIAS.

That shall not trouble me.

[*Another shout from the wall.*]

Bring forth my armour.

[*His armour is brought and is quickly put upon him: lastly* IOLE *enters bearing his helmet, which she places on his head amid loud cries of joy.*]

My child, my only child, abide within.
I go to beat the Spartan from our gates.
Kiss me. Now, friends, unto the reeling wall!
Who follows Pelias, who then?

[*He rushes off surrounded by cheering crowd.* IOLE *stands gazing after him. Enter* LAOMEDON *and his mother with attendants. During the dialogue the light slowly wanes.*]

LAOMEDON.

Iole!

IOLE.

Laomedon!

LAOMEDON.

What tumult this and cry
About your quiet house?

IOLE.

The citizens

Crying upon my father to descend
And hurl him on the Spartan.

LAOMEDON.

Hath he gone?

IOLE.

This moment hath he burst into the battle.

LAOMEDON.

And I have from the battle held aloof,
Incurring public enmity: since I
Stood by him in his wrath against the city.
My mother — [*He goes up*]

IOLE.

And mine too [*going to* LEUCIPPE].

LEUCIPPE.

My child, I came
But for a moment with Laomedon,
To say that all things wait you in our house
Burnished and clean, and all the rooms are bright
With sparkling silver and with glowing gold.
And everywhere in vases and in bowls
In slow thought have I set your favourite flower;
And you, where'er you stray about the house,
Shall be surprised from window and from nook
By sudden sweetness on the winding stair;
Long silken robes are smoothed and spread for you,
And olden jewels lighting inner glooms.

So shall you come to us, beautiful child,
Not as a stranger mazèd in strange halls,
But to a home indeed. I pass away.

IOLE.

No, no!

LEUCIPPE.

Well, then, I yield authority.
I wonder, child, if you can love my boy
As I have done — I cannot think it — ah!
I know your love how deep — but can it be
Made up as mine is of so many prayers,
Such breathèd heaven, and sighed futurity,
Then solitary tears, and quaking thoughts?
It cannot be. And yet of all good things
That might befall him, this I most had hoped,
That he should choose for him e'en such a wife.

IOLE.

With all my heart and blood and breath I love him.

LEUCIPPE.

I know it; but you cannot understand
How difficult it seems to this grey heart,
Wearied, and making now no newer friends,
Only a few and faithful keeping now,
And therefore wrapped and folded up in him,
At last to yield him to thy fresher youth,
A dying tree unto a springing flower!
And — ah, I know it — were he torn between
Us two, he would obey the younger voice,
Stranger and sweeter. Now forgive these tears.

Old age will ever for itself repine.
I must return — to-morrow [*kissing her*].

IOLE.

Ah, to-morrow!

[*They embrace. Exit* LEUCIPPE *with attendants.*]

LAOMEDON [*coming down*].

What hath my mother said that makes thee pale?

IOLE.

Nothing — but for my father am I pale.
I wish he had not melted to that cry.
If anything befell him on this night —

This night of all we should not now be wrought
To apprehensions, but together clasped,
Dreaming against the red orb of the sun,
Silent in deep thoughts of the life to be.

LAOMEDON.

That lovely life that quivers even now
In unseen daybreak!

IOLE.

And in Eastern clouds
Beginning to be rosy for our sake.

LAOMEDON.

And soon the moon shall come, and soon the stars!

IOLE.

And moon and stars shall fade into that day.
I think to-night shall come a hush in heaven,
And all the air be awed before our bliss,
And children shall awaken in the stillness
Asking why such a silence holds the earth.

LAOMEDON.

There shall be music, too, for ears that hear it!

IOLE.

And low, sweet voices of the younger gods;

LAOMEDON.

Meetings of spirits amid moony forests;

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IOLE.

And risings of plunged lovers from the deep.
And as I dream the gods shall come to me,
Silent, and bringing splendours to my room
Like strange gifts laid out for a sleeping child.
Yet while so many suffer on the earth
We are so glad. Are we too glad?

LAOMEDON.

Too glad?

IOLE.

Tell me when first thy heart confessed this love
Wert idle or busy when the sweet news came?

LAOMEDON.

Ah, who shall say? "That moment broke the
dawn,
That moment sprang a star upon the air!"
When I was quickened, in my mother's womb,
I dimly sought thee with unopened eyes,
And when I wailed to live, I wanted thee.
And when I grew, and grieved, and loved the
Past,
Beautiful women from sea-legends thronged
Round thee, and looked on me from out those
eyes.

IOLE.

Those then it was whom thou didst love, not
me.

LAOMEDON.

No; but I mingled thee with stories old.

IOLE.

I have about my spirit in the sunset
A sense of opening and unfolding things,
Wild wonder — and that joy that sends the lark
Shuddering through azure into Elysium.
And yet — my father —

LAOMEDON.

Be not, Iole,
Troubled to-night.

IOLE.

If he were safe returned

[*She goes to the steps of the temple*]

Strong Goddess! Out of heaven incline thine ear

To my beseeching, that my father come

Safe from the battle. Here we stand, we two,

In such deep happiness as streams but once

On mortals: he to-morrow leads me home.

Then suffer no unlucky thing to mar

This marriage hanging in a summer dawn!

This perfect human frail felicity!

I will go in now, having prayed, to await him.

The timbrel shall be struck and we will dance,

That when he runs in triumph from the war

I too, his child, shall clasp him triumphing.
Farewell a little while.

LAOMEDON.

A little while.

[*Exit* IOLE.]

LAOMEDON.

[*Gazing on the setting sun.*]

O, thou descending glory! Shed on me,
And upon her thy blessing from the west.
And when thou dost regild the eastern wave,
Stream with a special splendour on us two,
Or fall in silent kindness on our heads!

[*A cry is heard from the wall, and a citizen rushes on, covered with dust.*]

What is that cry?

CITIZEN.

Victory, victory!
See! Pelias comes in triumph from the wall,
Borne hither glorying with uplifted sword!
The Spartan flies, and all his dead are left.

[*Another cry, louder and nearer.*]

LAOMEDON.

I 'll steal within the shadow, and behold
Father and daughter in one triumph clasped.

[*Various Soldiers and Citizens rush on, shouting; at last a concourse bearing* PELIAS *in their midst. As he approaches his house the doors are thrown open from within and* IOLE *and her maidens come dancing down*

the steps, playing on timbrels. PELIAS *suddenly reels backwards with a cry.*]

PELIAS.

Thou — thou!

A CITIZEN.

He reels — uphold him lest he fall.

ANOTHER.

Some wound, in the hot fight unnoted, now
O'ercomes him.

ANOTHER.

All stand from him — give him space!

PELIAS.

[*Slowly recovering, while* IOLE *and* LAOMEDON *bend over him.*]

Here am I broken, friends; depart from me!
For that which it has come on me to do
I can do best alone. But, Iole!
Stay thou — Yes, yes, and thou, Laomedon!
Ye two with me in this thing are concerned.

PHORCOS.

Then reassure all these, ere they depart,
Thou art not wounded.

PELIAS.

No — not in their sense!

PHORCOS.

Awhile we leave thee, then, but will return
Bearing for thee the crown of victory.

[*The crowd slowly goes off, murmuring.*]

PELIAS.

Children, the dreadful words which I must speak
I will speak briefly. When I sought the goddess
If I should prosper in the shock of spears,
Thus did she answer me: "Hear, Pelias!
Thou shalt deliver the city with thy sword.
But one thing is required of thee: that thou,
When thou returnest bright from victory,
Shalt slay in sacrifice whatever first
Shall meet thee coming forth out of thy door."

And thou, my daughter, thou hast met me first.
This, goddess, then, dost thou require of me,
That I who saved the city shall slay my child.

LAOMEDON.

Surely this thing shalt not be done in Corinth!
While I have breath and blood in me I cry
"This shall not be!" I care not for the gods,
Nor god, nor goddess in this dear extreme.
What justice is in this — what law? what right?
That thou, because thou hast delivered Corinth,
Must therefore turn the sword on thine own child!
And she — what hath she done that she must die?

She is too great a price to pay for Corinth.
Not all the rearèd cities of the world
Are worth the smallest drop of blood in her.
Strange priest, whose victim is thy only child.

PELIAS.

Spare thy wild words!

LAOMEDON.

Remember, too, that thou,
In slaying her, shalt slay me too with her.
Thinkst thou I could survive that death of deaths,
Or linger in a glimmer after her,
The world a body whence the soul hath fled?
And this shall kill my mother in her halls,
Who waits to lay a daughter on her heart.

How empty those old arms to-morrow morn!
And thou shalt dash that fair futurity
Built by us two adream in a cold world,
The holy language of unsundered souls,
The steady bliss, or sorrow bravely shared.
For when I take in mine thy daughter's hand,
I loose it not till the last numbness. Then
Wilt thou destroy this fair imagined life,
Conceived with dim eyes under many stars,
With silence, or with whisper beautiful?
I call upon thee to withstand the gods.
Here I, Laomedon, do cry aloud
There is no justice in the hollow heaven!
But if, old man, thou wilt not fight the gods,
I will withstand thee e'er thou dost this thing,
E'er thou shalt touch that bosom with the steel,
I, loving thee, will slay thee with my hands.

PELIAS.

Son, do thy words make easier this deed?
I would I saw some way to evade the doom;
And yet, which way I look, it seems that I
Must pay for victory the price required.
For how shall blind and transitory things
Argue the wisdom that directs the sun,
And sees beyond all winds a windless west?
And yet — and yet — how should I gird myself
With priestly stroke to spill the blood I gave?
I who have lain in trouble through the night,
Had I but spoken a swift word to her,
Clouding a moment her transparent life,
She is more close to me than any child;
The woman I did love so leaves in her
Much of herself, remembered of all men,

Smiles in her smile, and kisses me anew.
The girl hath old soft ways and moods of her,
And in her moving, too, the deep slight charm.
If I shall slay her, I slay two in one!
How holy art thou then, so filled with her!
And by this death I touch thee, and thy mother,
Who waits with wistful thought within thy halls;
And last, that fair imagined mutual life,
And the long melody of mingled souls
Silenced! And I too, having done this thing,
How shall it aid me in my hollow home,
How shall it comfort me when rain begins
At early eve, that I did save the city?
Shall it make up to me for loss of her

That I shall hear behind me where I walk
Strange voices murmuring praise; or stand
acclaimed
Wearing their crown, her blood upon my hand?
Rather let death upon the dying fall!
Goddess, since this my victory demands
Death, and no less a price; suffer thou me,
Who conquered, so to die! Is not my blood,
Albeit old and pale, acceptable?
Or must that crimson fountain spout for thee?
I wait thy word to fall upon my sword,
Myself to atone for my own victory.
Answer me, goddess! answer! [*A pausc.*
She is dumb!

IOLE.

Father, and thou belovèd, hear me speak!

When first I heard thy dreadful words I stood
Amazed, and slowly the full drift perceived:
Thou, having saved the city, must slay thy
child.
Then said I to myself, "How should I die?
How should my father with those very hands
That lifted me with laughter o'er his head,
And pulled my face back for the perfect kiss,
Strike through my heart? I am his only child;
No brother have I, nor sister, and my mother
Under my gathered roses lies asleep.
I am the sole companion of his life,
And he will sit most lonely if I leave him."
When I no more shall sing to thee at even,
Father, or touch the strings in falling light,
Or ask thee of my mother in the dusk,
Bringing relief to thee to speak of her,

And ease with spoken words the dwelling
mind.
And it would grieve me in the ground to think
That this white head unkindly might be used.
First of thy loneliness I thought, my father.
Then thou, ah! thou, upon the edge of bliss
And yearning but for red clouds in the east,
Suddenly dashed! But no! I cannot speak
Of what lies warm and hushed between us two.
Dearest, if this come not to pass, be silent:
It was too beautiful now to recall.
Indeed, I cannot well believe that thou
Could'st take life up again where I had left it,
Still feeling vainly for a little hand.
We have so grown together thou could'st not,
Torn clean away, go bleeding on alone.
Last of myself I thought — how hard to die!

For had I been a babe that just beholds
The light, sweet chuckling, and then loses
breath,
It had not been so difficult; or had I
Endured remote and lone into old age,
Had faded from a garden to a grave,
Passing without a tear into the stars.
But I all o'er am tingling for sweet life,
And all my blood is eager for the earth,
My heart wild with the wonder of the place.
Now suddenly to leave this purple light,
And go a ghost unto a birdless grove;
Aye to remember under grieving boughs,
With souls that rust by rim of rivers old,
Conveying ever downward the dry leaf!
And — in this hour there is no shame to say it —
I would have loved thine arms about me fast,

The thrilling kiss, and mastering clasp of thee,
And to surrender to thy smouldering touch,
Yielding my mystery in deep of night.
And I have that in me which deeply craves
For children, to bear sons unto my lord,
To bring lives like a vassal to my king,
To feel the gums of heroes at my breast,
And mighty poets drink their fill of me.
Then must I go imperfect to the dark,
In tragic purity into the gloom,
Untouched into the region of the dead?
Yet, father, yet belovèd, there hath crept
Into mine ear a far and secret call;
A sweet, and a low, and yet a mighty voice,
I know not whence, that sayeth to me
"Come!"
Something is touched within me from on high,

Nobler than care for thee, or love of thee,
Or holier wish for children, or desire
For the earth splendour; something that ere-
now
Hath urged to deeds whereof we reason not,
To deeds which bow the head and blind the
eyes;
Mighty rejections of uplifted souls,
And sea-shore pyres and ever-ringing deaths,
And dooms that dazzle still from setting suns.
I of this cup it seems am capable.
Yet is there nothing in this hour of tears,
Nor have I the least quiver of the nerve;
How quiet is this heart that soon shall stop!
I feel that I am carried from the earth,
And lifted up, I know not by what hand;
Alcestis winds her arm about my waist,

And pale Iphigenia kisses me.
How large, too, is the manner of my death!
Behold I fall, but for a city saved,
Behold I die, but for a people freed!
Therefore am I prepared to take thy stroke
Even as kindly, father, as thy kiss.
But, O, with thee the anguish, not with me!
And yet recall that strong fleet loosing blow;
The priestly father and the victim child;
Remember Agamemnon, lord of men,
Who, as his daughter flowed unto the ground,
Felt on his neck the favourable breeze
Releasing all the sails in Aulis bay.
Take me within. And — since thou art a soldier —
Thou knowest where to strike me — here, is't not?

Once, and no more, that I may have no pain —
I know this death is nobler than all life.

[PELIAS *and* IOLE *ascend the steps.*]

LAOMEDON.

Iole!

IOLE.

Ah belovèd, make no cry,
While we in silence take our last embrace!

[*They pass into the house. The stage slowly darkens, there is a pause.*]

LAOMEDON.

Did she cry out then? No, she will not cry.
Still silence! And for me a blow self given!

[*Exit.*]

[*Citizens and others rush on with acclamation, calling the name of* PELIAS. PHORCOS *stands on the steps holding in his hands the crown of victory.* PELIAS *comes slowly from within. There is a bloodstain on his hands and robe.*]

PELIAS.

Friends, I would not intrude on public joy
A private grief, or general triumph jar
With single sorrow; one word will I speak,
Lifting these bloody hands unto the clouds,
Then go within. The gods, whom none may flout,
Decreed that if I should deliver Corinth,
Then should I sacrifice whatever first

Should meet me coming forth out of my doors.
Now she that met me first was my own child.
So, being young, I laid her on my arm,
And drove the sword at one stroke through her heart;
I do not think I gave her any pain.
This soil then on my hands and on my robe,
It is the life blood of my only child.
I have no son, my wife is in her grave;
Therefore with lonely hands I take this crown
And place it as a conqueror on my brow.
And in the days to come, when I am cold,
Forget not, men of Corinth, that I saved,
Not without grief, this city and your homes.

[*The crowd disperses in silence. Then the* PRIESTESS *appears on the steps of the temple, she and* PELIAS *gazing on each other as the curtain falls.*]

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